

No Rest for the Restless by **watermelloncat**

Category: Stranger Things, 2016

Genre: Friendship, Hurt-Comfort

Language: English

Status: In-Progress

Published: 2019-09-30 07:43:09

Updated: 2019-09-30 07:43:09

Packaged: 2019-12-12 17:38:22

Rating: K+

Chapters: 1

Words: 2,009

Publisher: www.fanfiction.net

Summary: I've recently finished my binge watch of Stranger Things and many ideas for stories have popped in my head. This one is set after the events of Season 2 – no spoilers included. The story remains true to the storyline where Steve and Nancy are just friends... but a girl can wish. Let me know what you think in the comments, I'm excited to hear back from you D

No Rest for the Restless

It was a scramble of feet to get to Steve's car in the school parking lot, and there wasn't much fair play involved. Everyone had ignored Mike's announcement of "shotgun!" and it was every man for himself to get to the passenger door.

While there was a tussle of pushing and shoving friends into curbs, Will outsmarted the system and stepped around the group, out of reach, and took off towards the car. Yells of protest sounding behind him as his friends detached themselves and ran after him.

He smiled back at them in victory when he reached the door before tugging the handle and hopping inside. By the time he had put his bag at his feet and buckled his seatbelt, the rest of the boys were scrambling into the backseat.

"Hey" he said breathlessly to Steve, still trying to catch his breath from running.

"Hey" Steve echoed.

Will immediately noticed something was off about the teenager. Normally Steve was full of childlike energy but in his current state he just seemed flat. His skin was slightly pale a part from his nose, and his hair was somewhat messy which was unusual. The congestion and gravelly tone that had sounded in his voice were further clear giveaways that something was amiss.

"Are you okay? You sound sick" Will asked without hesitation.

"Yeah, I'm not feeling so great" Steve admitted before a raggedy breath escaped him. "Hig'txxheew... hih'Tshshhh" he pitched forward; powerful sneezes being muffled into a handful of tissues. He blew his nose quickly before shoving the tissues back in his pocket.

He sniffled and leaned his head back onto the seat, his eyes finding the rear-view mirror. The disgusted faces in the back seat looking back at him had a lot of nerve, boys their age were some of the most disgusting creatures to inhabit the earth. What business did they have

thinking that he was being disgusting for reasons that he couldn't help?

"Bless you, buddy" Dustin finally piped up after an uncomfortable silence.

"Yeah man" Lucas seconded, while Mike shifted uncomfortably before speaking. "We can call Nancy and Johnathan, if you're not feeling up to it."

Steve's eyebrows knitted together slightly, that wasn't a characteristically Mike thing to say.

"Johnathan wouldn't mind" Will affirmed, looking up with wide eyes at the teenager next to him.

"No, they're doing..." he trailed off unable to think of what they said they were doing, if only this cold would let him think straight, "something important."

"We could look after ourselves!" Mike suggested, earning a backing of excited yells and agreements from the rest of the kids.

Steve's initial protests were drowned out by the racket the kids had put on thanks to his diminishing voice. So, he cleared his throat before trying again.

"Okay! I feel like shit, but you guys can't be left on your own" he earned himself a share of disappointed noises and sad faces, "you can barely remember to tie your own shoelaces."

"Hey, just because I tripped over that *one* time!" Dustin protested as Steve shifted the car into gear, signalling that the argument was over.

The car trip to Mike's was filled with the boys talking excitedly about the game of Dungeons and Dragons that they were going to play. Most of that time was spent pestering Will into giving them clues about what story they were going to be playing, he wouldn't give them any.

Steve spent the drive sniffing into the back of his hand and hoping he wouldn't sneeze and accidentally crash them all into a mailbox in

a momentary loss of control. It was clear that by the time he pulled them safely into Mike's driveway, all he wanted to do was go to sleep.

As soon as the car rolled to a stop the doors flew open and the boys all rushed out, whooping and yelling excitedly on their way to the door, leaving Steve slowly trailing behind. It took a few moments before he registered that they were already talking about starting their game of Dungeons and Dragons.

"Hey, hey!" he interjected, "you all know the rules. Homework first."

As expected, he received many complaints and stamped feet in protest. His eyes scrunched subconsciously, the noise giving him a headache. He wished the girls were there, Max would be able to get them under control with a few choice words, or El could literally force them all through the door if necessary. But today was boys' day.

"Alright! Shut your traps and get inside" it was the crack in Steve's voice that persuaded them to oblige, they shouldn't be arguing with him when he was already feeling so poorly.

The lounge of the Wheeler's house was a mess of sprawled limbs, the children lying haphazardly over the furniture and on the floor. Their homework pages strewn like a cobblestone pathway across the carpet. Quiet chatter fluttered among them, allowing Steve at the dining room table, to complete his own homework in peace.

Except, he couldn't concentrate. It's not that the homework was any harder than normal. Not that he did his homework often, if it weren't for him trying to set a good example for the kids, he probably wouldn't do it. But it was getting steadily harder to remember what the questions had just asked him to do.

Tiredly he glanced up and over to the kitchen sink where the dishes still sat from when he'd made the little knuckleheads Eggos. A testament to how run down he was feeling, there's no technical effort in popping toaster waffles, but they seemed to enjoy them as expected. Though he figured El wouldn't be too happy they ate them without her, but he was sure she'd forgive them when they got more.

Stifling an ever more frequent cough in the back of his throat, he turned back to his homework.

He sighed as he rubbed his eyes groggily. He'd looked over the same maths question seemingly a hundred times, he knew he'd done something wrong but he couldn't figure out where he went wrong.

Just when he was debating whether to snap his pencil in frustration, he heard Mike speak from behind him, "homework's all finished. We're going to the basement, so you know you haven't lost us."

Steve makes a noncommittal noise, still looking at his maths problem. Mike takes pity on him, knowing that he's struggling, and steps forward to look over his shoulder. "You've forgotten to carry the 17 from over here" he points to a spot on the page almost immediately.

"Thanks buddy, you're a genius" Steve tells him as he corrects his mistake.

Steve's half asleep at the table when the front door swings open.

"Steve?" Nancy stumbled back a bit; she'd thought that he would be down in the basement where she was sure the boys would be.

"Nancy?" Steve pushed himself up from the table, confused. He hadn't been expecting to see Nancy until much later, if at all.

"Johnathan got called in to cover a shift at work" she explained, registering the slightly stunned look on Steve's face. He also looked exhausted. "Are you okay?"

"Yeah, fine" Steve drew his eyes away from her, resisting the urge to sniffle and make himself look more pathetic.

"It's just that I... at school I noticed that you were looking run down, and you're really not looking any better now" she hesitated, leaning against the wall by the staircase. "I'm going to tell Will that he's going to be staying here tonight" Nancy quickly moved on, like she regretted what she'd said, before she hurried away down to the basement.

The gentle thud of the medicine bottle being placed on the table was

enough to make Steve look up. "I know we're just friends but..." Nancy trailed off as she slid into the seat next to Steve.

"Nance" Steve shook his head.

"Just take it, it's no problem" she interjected. "We have heaps of this stuff. Holly gets us sick all the time from preschool."

Steve sighed in defeat. When Nancy was determined there was no changing her mind. Taking it as a signal of agreement, Nancy measured out the medicine.

"Sorry, we don't have pills or anything" she apologised as she slid the small cup over to Steve who took it like a shot, grimacing afterward.

"You're so much better than Mike" she chuckled, "he's 13 and still acts like a baby."

Steve smiled a little, he could picture Nancy trying to force-feed medicine to Mike while he threw a tantrum. "The five-year age gap makes a lot of difference" he tried to sniff against the itch in his nose but it didn't work.

He leant away from Nancy, his breath hitching as he drew his tissues out from his pocket. "Heh'Mmpt" he made to turn back around before he was interrupted and twisted to the side once again, "Heh'*RISSCCTCHH!*"

Nancy jumped on the second sneeze, she'd grown used to Steve always somewhat supressing his sneezes, but that one seemed to have snuck up on him before he could do so.

Hearing him continue to sniffle, she gets up and retrieves the bin from the kitchen, grabbing the box of tissues from the bench on the way back.

"Th-thanks... Hh'Txxch" Steve stifled forcefully into new tissues, his long fringe falling in front of his eyes. He sniffled and swallowed thickly, running a hand through his hair to put it back in place.

He debated whether to blow his nose or not, he sounded awful even to his own ears, but he didn't want to be disgusting in front of a girl,

especially not one as pretty as Nancy.

But Nancy knew his thought process. "Don't drown" she said, putting her hand gently on his arm.

"Sorry, excuse me" Steve muttered before he surrendered to his own embarrassment.

"How did you think you'd be able to look after kids like this anyway?" Nancy asked after Steve had thrown the tissues away.

"I don't know" Steve admitted. "They're pretty self-sufficient, except for driving. Unless you ask Max." He laughed a little, which turned into little chesty coughs into his elbow.

"You sound miserable" Nancy sympathised for him. "You should go home and rest."

Steve made a sound of protest, but before he could shake his head Nancy interjected. "Steve, you can't keep pushing yourself. You shouldn't have even been at school today."

There was a long silence while Steve sat in his chair processing his defeat. "You'll be alright watching the little gremlins?"

"Of course," she assured him. "Here, I'll help you pack up your stuff."

When Nancy had come down to the basement to tell the boys that she'd sent Steve home, she'd half expected them to turn on her, seeing as it was boys' day and she clearly wasn't a boy. Of course, they were sad but she wasn't sure whether that was because Steve had left or because he was so unwell. They had mentioned that they thought he'd looked terrible, she agreed with that.

It had been a few minutes since she'd helped him gather his things and stood with him in the doorway. "Call me when you get home, won't you?" she'd asked, as she drew the back of her hand away from his forehead. It had been made clear to them both that he was coming down with a fever. He'd promised her that he would, before walking to his car and pulling out of the driveway.

Now as she left the boys to themselves in the basement, she was at

peace with knowing that Steve would be getting some rest and not running around looking after a wild group of young boys. She knew he would be annoyed about it, but when she was helping him pack his things, she'd snuck the bottle of cold medicine into his bag when he wasn't looking.

Climbing onto her bed to wait next to her phone, she wondered when he'd find it, with a cheeky smile on her face.